

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 /073 W
-----102036Z 126634 /53
R 101540Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4044
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR
SUBJECT: SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS: MOSCOW RESUMES PRESS CRITICISM

1. SUMMARY: IN MOSCOW'S FIRST OPENLY CRITICAL CENTRAL
PRESS COMMENTARY ON CHINA SINCE THE DEATH OF MAO, PRAVDA
(FEB 10) CARRIES AN AUTHORITATIVE "OBSERVER" ARTICLE
BLAMING CHINESE FOR THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN NORMALIZING

SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND FOR SUPPORTING THE "OPPONENTS OF SOCIALISM AND THE REDUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS." ALTHOUGH THE ITEM REITERATES MOSCOW'S WISH FOR NORMAL RELATIONS, IT LOOKS TO US LIKE AN ADMISSION THAT THE CURRENT ROUND OF BORDER TALKS HAS BROUGHT NO PROGRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ARTICLE, CALLED "ANTI-SOVIET FICTION", IS OSTENSIBLY PEGGED TO A CHINESE STATEMENT ON THE CONFERENCE TO "LEARN FROM TACHING", BUT "OBSERVER" EXTRACTS ONLY THOSE PHRASES ON THE ALLEGED "SOVIET THREAT," -- A "FICTION" WHICH "OBSERVER" SAYS THERE IS NO NEED TO ANSWER. MOSCOW HAS MADE NUMEROUS ATTEMPTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS, "OBSERVER" CONTINUES, CITING THE 1971 NUF PROPOSAL AND ITS 1973 MODIFICATION, AS WELL AS REPEATED SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR SUMMIT MEETINGS. BUT PEKING DID NOT REPLY TO THESE PROPOSALS, SAYS "OBSERVER". IN RECENT MONTHS THE SOVIETS HAVE TRIED AGAIN, BUT PEKING SPEAKS OF A "SOVIET THREAT" AND THEREBY "ONLY PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THE OPPONENTS OF SOCIALISM AND THE REDUCTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS." "OBSERVER" CONCLUDES BY ASSERTING THAT THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT THREATEN ANYONE AND FOLLOWS LENINIST PRINCIPLES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES INCLUDING CHINA.

3. COMMENT. THIS ARTICLE THUS BREAKS MOSCOW'S VIRTUAL CESSATION OF ANTI-CHINESE POLEMICS EXACTLY FIVE MONTHS AFTER IT BEGAN WITH MAO'S DEATH ON SEPTEMBER 9. ALTHOUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A FEW ITEMS IMPLICITLY CRITICAL OF CHINA HAVE APPEARED IN THE MEANTIME, THIS IS THE FIRST DIRECT CRITICISM ON THE CENTRAL PRESS, AND THE "OBSERVER" BYLINE INDICATES SPECIAL AUTHORITY.

4. IT IS NOT A SLASHING INDICTMENT OF THE POST-MAO REGIME, AND IS CAREFULLY CONFINED TO BILATERAL RELATIONS, ON WHICH IT STRONGLY REITERATES MOSCOW'S PEACEFUL INTENTIONS. THUS IT DOES NOT YET REPRESENT A RETURN TO THE SCALE OF POLEMICS WHICH WAS ROUTINE BEFORE MAO'S DEATH. BUT THE EFFECT IS NEVERTHELESS TO PLACE THE BLAME SQUARELY ON PEKING FOR THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN NORMALIZING RELATIONS, AND IT DOES NOT IMPLY ANY SOFTENING OF THE SOVIET POSITION. COMING NEARLY THREE MONTHS AFTER CHIEF BORDER NEGOTIATOR IL'ICHEV'S RETURN TO PEKING, AND THREE WEEKS AFTER IL'ICHEV'S UNPUBLICIZED MEETING WITH PRC FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA, IT STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT MOSCOW IS ADMITTING THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO PROGRESS IN THE PRESENT ROUND OF BORDER TALKS.

TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW01947
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770048-0700
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770254/aaaabvzb.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ae5274c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3355021
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS: MOSCOW RESUMES PRESS CRITICISM
TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ae5274c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009